

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

NOV-DEC 2010, VOLUME 37, NO. 11

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Sterling Heights Chrysler Rally in Michigan.

PHOTO/ DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

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IT'S TIME FOR THE PEOPLE TO FORECLOSE ON THE BANKS

EDITORIAL

The “Foreclosuregate” Scandal is a signal to the American people that the time has come for all of us to stop submitting to illegal bank foreclosures on our homes.

In September, people's scattered but growing resistance finally tipped the scales. It blew open an expose of bank fraud so massive that even compliant judges and news media could no longer contain it. We already knew that the millions of American foreclosures were morally wrong – working people heartlessly evicted to enrich the wealthiest corporations in the world. Now we learned that the banks were also engaged in wholesale common criminal activity – deliberately falsified documents, altered dates, perjured affidavits, and forged signatures – on a systemic scale. These are not just some “robo-signings” or “document flaws.” They are felonies committed so flagrantly that they undermine the rule of American law as we know it. Even the most predatory corporations in America were forced to temporarily suspend foreclosures.

The bank fraud spree was caused by the very workings of the mortgage securitization process itself. To facilitate the sale of Mortgage Security Bonds, the banks created an electronic data base called MERS (Mortgage Electronic Registry System). Although it violated IRS rules and state real estate laws, MERS was used to package the bonds into tranches to be bought and sold on the market. Some 62 million properties in the US have now come to be recorded in the MERS system, 60 percent of all the mortgages in the country. But since MERS is only a database, and does not own anything, many courts have ruled that it cannot convey titles and cannot convey the authority to foreclose. As a result, when faced with foreclosure situations, the banks responded by fabricating documents out of the air.

In addition to bank fraud, the foreclosures are caused by a deeper systemic crisis. The historic replacement of human labor by technology has led to



Residents of Sacramento, California, rally to support the rights of the displaced and homeless.

PHOTO/SANDY PEERY

massive job loss – over 8 million jobs in the US alone since 2007. The old method of distributing social wealth, the wages system, simply cannot survive in an economic system where there are fewer and fewer jobs. Wealth can no longer circulate when millions of people become permanently cut off from the economy and unable to meet their most basic needs – including paying the mortgage bill.

Just as we cannot make a living in the same old way, we cannot fight for justice in the old way. We have to begin organizing ourselves politically – in the courts, the streets, and the legislatures – and reach out to all those impacted not just by foreclosures but by the larger housing crisis and economic breakdown. The first step is to demand nationalization of the banks in the interests of the people. Regulations, moratoriums, and big bank break-ups may help for a while, but like Freddy Krueger, the banks will keep coming back. We have to demand a permanent and total takeover, expropriation of the shareholders, arrest of the profiteers, and jailing of those who masterminded the fraud epidemic.

As a matter of fact, the government already owns huge sectors of the banks. Through the Federal Housing Administration, Fannie Mae, and Freddie Mac, the government already owns or insures over 96 percent of the mortgages in America. The problem is that the government continues to allow private management of the banks, profits for private investors, and billion dollar bonuses for executives. In fact, what has really been nationalized so far are mainly the toxic mortgages. True nationalization would require public, non-profit management by government employees for the benefit of the people, and confiscation of assets obtained by illegal activities.

“Foreclosuregate” has created a life and death crisis for both the banks and the American people. As we speak, the banks are devising legal and political strategies to override the courts, Congress, and state legislatures to allow them to proceed with foreclosures, preserve their profitability, and impoverish our nation. We need a strategy to defend our homes, our families, and the future of our democracy itself.

Why Revolutionaries Need A Press

From the Editors

We are sometimes asked “Why do revolutionaries need a press?” The answer has to do with this moment in history. People are struggling just to get the basic necessities of life. Historical forces beyond anyone's control have set the stage for a new society to be built, but from this point on, how things turn out depends on what people think. This means that those of us who are seeking fundamental change are engaged in a battle of ideas, a struggle to win the hearts and minds of the people. If we don't raise the consciousness of the people and unite them around a vision of a better world and a strategy to achieve it, then we'll fail in our effort to build a just and free society. To win the battle of ideas, we need a press.

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PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

The People's Tribune is devoted to the proposition that an economic system that can't or won't feed, clothe and house its people ought to be and will be changed. To that end, this paper is a tribune of the people. It is the voice of millions struggling for survival. It strives to educate politically those millions on the basis of their own experience. It is a tribune to bring them together, to create a vision of a better world, and a strategy to achieve it.

We find ourselves at a historic moment as labor-replacing technology leads us on a path toward the decisive reconstruction of society. Who will win – the capitalists or the growing mass of poor – will depend on winning the hearts and minds of the people to create a society whose fruits benefit all.

We offer our pages as a vehicle for the new ideas rooted in our reality, and to be the voice of those who seek to raise the consciousness of society. Let us gather our collective experience, intelligence and commitment to bring forth a vision that changes America into a society “by the people, of the people, for the people.”

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Deadlines for articles and art: The deadline for articles, photographs and other art is the first of each month for the issue that comes out at the beginning of the following month. For example, the deadline for the June issue is May 1. Articles should be as short as possible, and no longer than 600 words. We reserve the right to edit articles to conform to space limitations.

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Publisher: People's Tribune
ISSN# 1081-4787

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2010 Elections: THE PEOPLE DEMAND JOBS

COVER STORY

The 2010 general elections are over. As in 2008, the American voters once again voiced the economy as their number one issue of concern. They are afraid and want economic growth, with job-creating solutions. The party in power failed to provide these solutions. As a result, the Democrats took a trouncing nationally and also in state-wide contests across the country. The American people voted the in's - out and put the out's - in, just as they had done in 2008 when Obama was elected president. But neither corporate political party can solve the ongoing structural and systemic economic crisis.

Under a capitalist system of production and exchange, getting the economy growing requires a market. A market requires demand. Demand requires the ability to buy. The ability to buy requires income. Income requires a job. Today, a job requires being hired in an economy that is everyday replacing workers with new, highly automated, electronic technology. During the Great Depression of the industrial era it was possible to create temporary jobs programs when the



Protest of autoworkers, Michigan.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

Sister/Brother, can you spare \$20?

The People's Tribune brings clarity to the growing movement. It unites revolutionaries around a vision of a better world and a strategy to achieve it. It has no paid staff and gets no corporate grants. The paper is financed solely by our readers. We need your support to continue telling the truth.

One-time donations are welcome. If you can spare \$20 a month or more, you'll be a hero. Please make donations payable to People's Tribune and send to P.O. Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654. You can also donate via Paypal at www.peoplestribune.org.

People's Tribune
Editorial Board

human laborer didn't have to compete with the laborless production of computers and robots. However, that electronic competition is a global reality today.

Look at the direction of the global economy as a whole. Everywhere there are less jobs. How can a net increase in jobs be created when the global economy is increasingly producing more with less labor? Productivity growth today is based on increasing the application of computer and robotic methods of production. The result is less buying power. The American people are already producing more than they can purchase. We are seeing the beginning of the end of a wage-labor based system of buying and selling.

Both corporate parties must grapple with this reality. However, they are strategically united to save the capitalist class and to protect private property at all

costs. They just differ tactically on how to do it. The real issues facing the American people are never discussed. Those issues increasingly revolve around the fact that more people can not survive in this outmoded, labor-based economic system. It must be replaced with a system that is compatible with laborless production. Such a system must distribute the social product (food, clothing, housing, healthcare, education, etc.) on the basis of need and not on the ability to buy.

At some point, new politics must and will emerge to allow such a debate to begin. When, is the question. New trends will start to reveal themselves. Subtle changes in people's thinking about the problem in a new way will begin to take shape. In this context it's interesting to note that an exit poll conducted and reported by CNN on November 2 said 62% of the voting

public identified the troubled economy as the number one issue. Combine this with a poll conducted a month earlier by the Pew Research Center that found more voters now identify themselves as Independents at 37%, than as Democrats at 34%, or Republicans at 29%.

Today the American people see the party in power as the problem. However, there is a growing awareness that both parties are incapable of solving the crisis. The next fundamental step is for some of this awareness to begin to consciously reject both parties and see the economic crisis as systemic, requiring new ideas, a new kind of thinking and a new political approach. Only then will the political terrain begin to sufficiently shift and create a new environment to engage in broader independent political discourse and the political struggle to create the new out of the old.

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The Meaning of May Day, Part 2

By Sean Crawford

Editor's Note: The following is part 2 of a speech given on May Day that appeared in the July-August edition of the People's Tribune.

Martial law was declared and hundreds of Union workers were arrested and brutally interrogated. Eight people were put on trial for the murder of the officer, seven were sentenced to death. It is clear that the accused were being convicted for their *political beliefs, not for murder*. Most of the accused were not even in the area at the time of the incident and no evidence was provided that they were involved in any part of the bombing. In the end four were hung, one committed suicide, while awaiting execution and the other three stayed in prison for six long years before receiving a pardon from the governor and being cleared of any wrongdoing. The actual bomb thrower was never identified.

These eight men came to be known

as the Haymarket martyrs and their story has served as a focal point to galvanize the labor movement worldwide. But as we remember these eight and their sacrifice every year on the first of May we must not lose sight of the struggles we currently face.

We live in a system that requires us to *bail out companies when they're doing badly but forbids us from sharing in their profits when they do well*. A system where many still go without health care, but yet *in every other nation in the Western world health care is considered a human right, not a tradable commodity!* A system that is *slowly hemorrhaging the decent jobs* that were once the foundation of a large middle class; whose standard of living had never been achieved before at any point in human history. A living standard achieved, in large part, through the risk, intelligence, sweat and bloodshed of the United Auto Workers, here, in this very community. And how do we honor this legacy? My

generation is the first in US history to enjoy a lower standard of living than our parents. How can we allow this to happen?

May Day requires us not only to recognize our battles, but also how we must face them. Solidarity, in a word, has given us everything, from a minimum wage to social security, the eight-hour work day to child labor laws and *indeed every bit of our social safety net*. Unified action has been the most effective and reliable tool we possess. We, the working class, don't have the world's wealth at our disposal. What we have is our numbers and our common goals. When we realize what we want and fight for it together, nothing can stop us. But without solidarity everything can be taken from us. Companies are global. Exploiting every nation on the planet for raw materials and labor. Doing it with one goal in mind. To make as much profit as possible; with little or no regard to its effects on people or the planet that

sustains us.

The battlefield has changed, whether we recognize it or not. Companies no longer restrict themselves to national boundaries and neither must labor. If we are to thrive again and build a new labor movement that can ensure our standard of living, we can no longer afford to focus on our narrow self-interests. We must redirect our energies to building a true solidarity, a worldwide movement that embraces all working people, of all nations. We must recognize that our fate is intertwined.

May Day is our international workers holiday and we must use it to reach out to our brothers and sisters across the globe, and across the street, to fight for our common humanity.

To quote my favorite union song, one that has inspired me for many years.

But the union makes us strong.

Solidarity forever,

SCIENCE COLUMN

The FDA and the approval of AquaAdvantage Salmon: Can the FDA decide on the safety of genetically modified organisms?

By Dr. Issac Wolf

On September 19th, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Veterinary Medicine Advisory Committee began its review of the safety and effectiveness of the AquaAdvantage Salmon, an Atlantic salmon that has been genetically modified to grow twice as fast as the wild-type Atlantic salmon. If approved, the AquaAdvantage Salmon will be the first genetically modified animal approved for human consumption in the United States.

In September 22 and October 19 online commentaries, the Institute of Science in Society (www.i-sis.org.uk) stated that "transgenic fish have not been studied adequately, as they should have been, using animal feeding experiments followed by comprehensive tissue necropsy and that material differences between genetically modified salmon and unmodified Atlantic salmon do exist." On September 29, the Washington Post reported that 11 senators have urged the FDA to halt the approval process as "serious health and environmental questions regarding the fish cannot be adequately evaluated by the public."

It is clear that the FDA should halt the approval process for the AquaAdvantage Salmon until all of the safety issues are adequately addressed. However, there are more basic issues. The October 19 ISIS statement included the observation that "the FDA should reconsider its tolerant acceptance of risks in the service of biotechnological advancement."

But, the lack of adequate control of drug and food safety by the FDA is only a symptom, not the problem. The basic question is: "is our society capable of taking advantage of the potential offered by modern genetics?"

The answer to this question lies in the history of humankind's struggle to feed itself. Almost from the very beginning of the domestication of plants and animals for food production, farmers have worked to increase yield by selective breeding and by cross fertilization or hybridization. Corn, for example, is the result of a selective breeding process begun by the Maya in Mexico and Central America around 4000-2000 BC. Today, most of the food produced in the US and Europe is produced using hybrid-organisms.

In 1865, Gregor Mendel postulated the laws of "Segregation" and "Independent Assortment" describing the scientific basis of hybridization. In 1953, the science of genetics was revolutionized when Francis Crick and James Watson published the molecular structure of the DNA-helix and "Molecular Genetics" replaced "Mendelian Genetics". The potential effect on food production is



Size comparison of a genetically modified Salmon (background) vs. a regular Atlantic salmon sibling (foreground) of the same age.

PHOTO/AQUABOUNTY TECHNOLOGIES

simple but profound. With "Mendelian Genetics" you are guided by the end product, the expression of the genotype, for example the number of ears of corn per stalks, and restricted to cross-fertilization with species that express the desired traits in a hit-or-miss process. "Molecular Genetics" determines the actual source of the desired trait, the gene or DNA sequence, and allows one to change or replace it to produce the desired effect.

The promise of "Molecular Genetics" is that we are no longer limited by what exists, but can now create organisms to realize the dream of feeding the world. The potential exists for the production of nutritional, cheap and safe food without the need for pesticides, fertilizers, antibiotics or other toxic materials. The

development of the AquaAdvantage Salmon may represent a step towards the development of a cheap and abundant supply of food. However, under the current economic system, transgenic foods must be developed for private profit not for public benefit. The FDA is a servant of capital set in place to ensure an orderly development and exploitation of new food and drug products. It is not an impartial arbitrator for the public good. The only way to decide if a particular transgenic food is safe and desirable is to remove the profit motive. Science has brought us to the edge of abundant, healthy food for all, it is now time for us to get rid of the last barrier, Capitalism.

Our Streets Will Not Be Silenced! Las Calles No Se Callan!

By Michele Nicole Simpson and Rosalynn Warren

The San Antonio Free Speech Coalition and the International Woman's Day March Planning Committee vs. the City of San Antonio

San Antonio, Texas saw more than forty thousand people take to the streets in 2006 raising their voices for immigrant rights. The following year, City Council passed an ordinance in November 2007, hindering community groups from organizing marches like this. City council voted to charge from \$2,000 up to \$40,000 or more for a permit to use our own public streets. Fees can be waived if the city agrees with or "sponsors" a group's message. Community groups don't have that kind of money and the city knows it. These prohibitive costs are being used as a way to silence and control political protests as well as traditional cultural processions like Mexican Posadas and Dia De Los Muertos.

The ordinance over-charges for the cost of traffic barricades and police officers. Since a third of the City budget received from our tax paying dollars already goes to the SAPD, charging us twice for police is preposterous. The Texas Traffic Manual states that barricades should not be used for most street marches, but the City still requires marchers to rent an excessive amount of barricades. Shouldn't it be adequate for two motorcycle cops to stop traffic at intersections? Yet they continue to over-

police, saying that "those kind of marchers" need to be "herded like cats," said one city official. Almost every march/protest that happens in this country is peaceful, yet police continue to arrest and assault peaceful protestors. Marches that I have participated in have had Peace Keepers. These individuals are trained in providing safety for marchers and acting as liaisons between marchers and police.

The City says a "free alternative" is to use sidewalks, but there are few wheelchair accessible sidewalks and many streets don't have sidewalks. This is unsafe for differently abled, elders and marchers that may spill into the street. Even then, we risk getting ticketed for impeding the sidewalk.

This unconstitutional ordinance limits our First Amendment rights and discriminates by arbitrarily charging some groups more than others based on whether the City agrees with a message or not. We should ALL have access to the streets! Historically, our streets have been a public forum where people can express their views. Public spaces are diminishing along with our right to come together and speak in solidarity about issues that affects us. It was the people taking their voices to the streets during the Civil Rights Movement that made progressive changes.

The San Antonio Free Speech Coalition was formed in November 2007 to challenge the ordinance and lead a community education campaign. The Coalition, together with the International



The San Antonio Free Speech Coalition and the International Woman's Day March Planning Committee fought a city ordinance hindering groups from organizing marches like the one that brought 40,000 people to the streets for immigrant rights.

PHOTO/DONATED

Woman's Day March Committee, filed a lawsuit against the City of San Antonio challenging the constitutionality of the ordinance.

In June of 2009, our case was dismissed without a trial. A summary judgment was issued in favor of the city. The community responded with a peaceful protest. Then in October we filed an appeal to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. In April of 2010, a delegation of community supporters, members of the Coalition and the International Woman's Day March Committee traveled to New Orleans for oral arguments to be heard

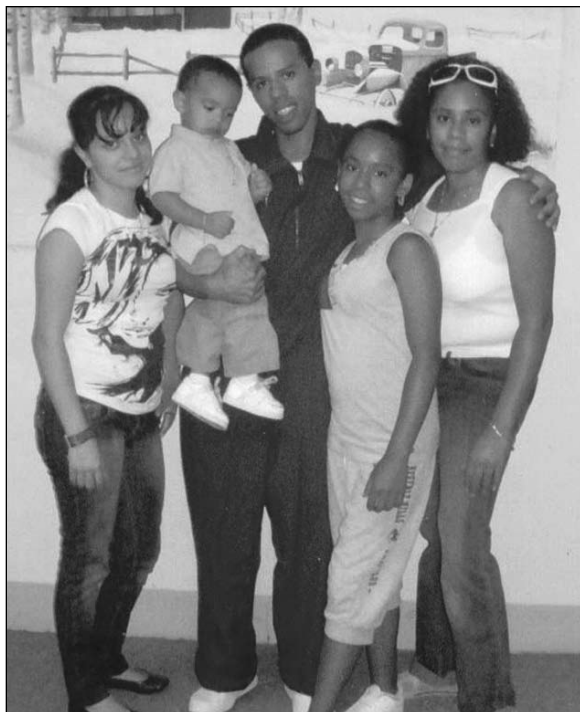
by the court. We filled the courtroom as Amy Kastely, the Coalition's lawyer, presented arguments clearly showing the blatant discrimination set forth with this ordinance. In September, we received a decision that was not in our favor. We are proceeding with the lawsuit and not giving up until freedom of speech is free. As governing powers continue to change and alter our rights for corporate convenience, we will continue to march and protest the injustices that we face! For more information, visit <http://www.esperanzacenter.org/freespeech>

"We will fight the bank and politicians and go to jail if we have to," says woman fighting foreclosure.

By Esther Smith

My name is Esther Smith I am 31 years old. I live with my two younger sisters, Barbara Cruz, Monica Smith and my 2 year old nephew Jovanie Rivera which I am caring for. I also have a brother named Aaron Smith who is incarcerated in the State Prison in Pennsylvania. My mother Esther Ortiz, who passed away two years ago, left us with a home which unfortunately is not fully paid; therefore I must manage to pay the monthly mortgage as well as other expenses.

I have worked different odd jobs to pay the bills but it is nowhere near enough. We are as of today facing foreclosure and the fear day by day of becoming homeless. I am currently doing all I can to pay the bills and deal with my young grieving sisters. Due to this extreme difficulty I am under a lot of stress. The holidays are drawing closer and I am going to do all I can with the Poor Peoples Economic Human Rights



Philadelphia family fighting foreclosure.

PHOTO/DONATED

Campaign (PPEHRC) to keep me and my little sisters and nephew from becoming homeless.

We will fight the bank and politicians and members of PPEHRC will go to jail if we have to. My mother had worked for us so hard to have a roof over our heads. She also helped others daily in the

movement to end poverty and she taught me how to be strong and fight. At 31 my life has taken a very different road. I am now having to be a mother to my sisters and having to fight foreclosure.

Please support myself and PPEHRC in this fight by following our website at <http://economichumanrights.org>

God bless and watch over all the families facing foreclosure this holiday season.

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Tax Foreclosures Sweep Wayne County, Michigan

By Maureen Taylor

The People's Tribune interviewed Maureen Taylor, chair of the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization.



Maureen Taylor, State Chair, Michigan Welfare Rights Organization (center).

PHOTO /DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

People's Tribune: Maureen, tell us about the tax foreclosures sweeping Wayne County, Michigan.

Maureen Taylor: In Wayne County, Michigan, at least 32 cities have residents that are woefully behind in property taxes. Upwards of 70% of the residents have defaulted. Only about 23% of the folks that have property taxes are current. Things are so bad in terms of unemployment that administrators of

the County were considering receivership because so many couldn't make the payment on the tax bills.

PT: Are these tax foreclosures also in affluent communities?

MT: Yes. There are cities like Inkster, Romulus, Detroit, and even Grosse Pointe Woods where there are residents from the ranks of the upper middle class persons living. So many factory workers, skilled trades workers, lawyers, doctors and other professionals have been laid off, they just walked away from their houses. When you ride through their main streets you can see 5-6-7 bedroom houses boarded up especially along the river.

PT: What are people doing about this?

MT: Mostly people pray. People go down to their local city government and city councils to ask for and demand help. We are bumping into each other as we try to figure out how to keep body and soul together. We have a mass walk away response underway. We have many houses underwater because of mortgage foreclosures—but we are also experiencing tax foreclosures. Here is an example of the perfect, white-collar corporate crime: when you first buy the

house, it lists for \$200,000 but now its worth \$50,000. The bank wants you to pay the original \$200,000 so the taxes are based on \$200,000. It's wholesale destruction of neighborhoods all over the county.

PT: What is the cause?

MT: We continue to allow this entity called capitalism to rape and pillage workers. It is a system that is based on 'gotcha,' on ambush, on feeding frenzy. They eat us and we die. Everything about capitalism is destruction. If the \$200,000 house is now worth \$50,000, they want you to still pay \$200,000. If you walk away and it's insured and it gets broken into, the bank still gets \$200,000 worth of insurance benefits on a wreck of a house. They keep getting paid over and over. You can't make this stuff up. It is this corrupt and diabolical system of capitalism which is the root cause of the world's misery. Why common ordinary people fail to see that God loves us equally and that God wants us to treat each other better, that is the real mystery. We should do better by each other.

PT: What is the next step?

MT: People are discussing what to do all across the country. The conver-

sation can't be relegated to this one is Democrat and this one is Republican. We are realizing finally that George Bush alone is not responsible for these problems, and that President Barack Obama alone cannot fix what is wrong. The "cult of the personality" thinking relies on our believing that this one person or that person can alter an entire system. We have to rise above these petty politics and ask how can we make our community, our society, responsible for ourselves and the children. Every adult, every child, the earth, the water the air - all are under massive attack by these corporations that would see everything destroyed while they make maximum profits at our expense. Nothing is sacred to them and they are experts at turning us on each other, when we are all just mothers and fathers. We can't take the next steps with the current guidelines in place because the feeding frenzy is at an all time high. We better think about what kind of new society we can organize where we can live and die of old age in our beds. That's the direction that honest and good people have to take.

The Sentence — No Justice for Oscar Grant

By Steven Miller

John Burris, the Grant family lawyer, summed it up quite well: Michael Vick got four years for organizing a dog-fighting ring; BART officer Mehserle got two years for killing a man who was handcuffed and laying at his feet, face down. "What you take from this is that Oscar Grant's life was not worth very much," stated Burris.

The history of the United States shows exactly how much: Oscar Grant was 3/5 of a human being. This is precisely how the US Constitution quantified the lives of slaves when it was passed in 1789.

Judge Robert Perry completely acceded to the demands of Mehserle's lawyer and threw out the mandatory gun enhancement. California demands that anyone guilty of a crime while using a gun serves up to an extra 10 years. This, of course, is used against every one in Oakland's Flatlands, where Mehserle murdered Grant on the Fruitvale BART platform.

Perry also stated that he saw no racial element in the case. However the lead officer in the conflict, Tony Pirone, was screaming racial epithets before, during and after the murder. Somehow the Alameda DA never saw fit to charge Pirone with anything at all.

Mehserle got credit for 292 days served and is expected to be out in seven months, if not less. His lawyer is demanding that he be released while he challenges the "unfair sentence." Once

again the verdict is in: the system condones and supports police murder.

The reality of life in the Flatlands, similarly to every major city, is that every young person knows that they could have been Oscar Grant. Immediate Death for Contempt of Cop is today an openly sanctioned implementation of the rule of law. Cops love to go ballistic at the slightest hint of defiance. There are important reasons why this form of execution has become a common thing.

1) The US today has the greatest polarization of wealth in human history. In an era of an unparalleled increase in productivity, due to electronic production, virtually all new wealth since 1970 has gone to the ruling class of billionaires.

The generation under 30 has never seen the social programs of the "Great Society". These have been systematically dismantled by both the Republicans and Democrats. Many people in this generation have never known any prosperity under capitalism. Young people – if they work at all – almost always have low-paying jobs, with no benefits and no job security. Thus this massive strata of society has no reason to be loyal, or obedient, to a system that robs and exploits them.

Yet the job of the police is to make people obey. They understand instinctively that young people have no necessary buy-in or loyalty to this system. Therefore they enforce obedience with storm trooper tactics.

2) Through the Drug Wars, and by creating special drug laws to target



Oscar Grant verdict protests, Oakland, CA.

PHOTO /KEOKI SEU

them, African-Americans, Latinos and the white inner-city (and rural) poor have been criminalized.

In 1970, the US jailed 200,000 people; today it jails 2 million, a ten-fold increase – even though the crime rates have stayed the same!

This is the political context for the reign of police terror that has produced massive police crime and murder. Massive police scandals have rocked New York, Chicago, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Oakland, just to name a few. Yet nothing is done.

Police brutality, evictions, foreclosures, ever-increasing prices, vanishing jobs, the elimination of programs that support people instead of corporations – all this and more is producing an ever-increasing number of people with no

real stake in this system.

People are struggling to imagine a world where corporations do not dominate every aspect of human life. This is a teachable moment because a new consciousness is bubbling up. Everyone who teaches – and most of us do – needs to step forward. Justice for Oscar Grant! This simple demand deserves a whole new world.

FBI Raids on Anti-war and Solidarity Activists Affect Everyone

Attend Fundraiser for Legal Defense
Nov. 24, 8pm at Martyrs',
3855 N. Lincoln, Chicago.
Fundraiser concert
featuring Rebel Diaz,
BBU, Scheme, l'Naru',
DJ Game Over and DJ
Ozone. Get tickets from
[www.martyrslive.com/
calendar](http://www.martyrslive.com/calendar). \$12 in advance
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Cabrini Green Evictions Continue — The Hidden Hand of the Corporations

By Joseph Peery

An old saying goes, “Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”

BRIEF HISTORY— About six months ago, the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) gave out 30-day eviction notices to everyone at 1230 N Larrabee. A federal judge voided the notices because they were in violation of the “RELOCATION AGREEMENT” between residents and the housing authority.

The CHA was due to appear in court before that same judge on Thursday, July 1, 2010, where they would surely have to answer for their misconduct. But like thieves in the night, on the Tuesday before the court date, they backed moving trucks up to the building and forcibly removed the residents to addresses they did not choose and against their wills.

On court day, the judge warned CHA to never do that again. Shortly later, 180-day notices were given to the three remaining high rises. A few months later, 364 and 365 W. Oak were emptied out, but are both still standing.

AT PRESENT— 1230 N. Burling is

the last Cabrini Green high-rise building still occupied. The occupants of the building are still enduring the same misconduct again from (CHA) in violation of the “RELOCATION AGREEMENT.”

Families in eviction court were told they were not going to be relocated when the building closes. When residents found out that was a lie, they were then told they had to move quickly to addresses chosen by CHA in areas more dangerous for them and in need of major repairs.

Residents resisted this and CHA’s lawyers then, during the week of November 1 thru 5, tried to file motions in eviction court to get judges to move the families out, claiming that the building needed to be shut down in the next few weeks. Even after residents and their lawyers presented evidence that CHA was prohibited by court order from closing the building until January 18, 2011, the CHA lawyers from Sanford Kahn LTD continued to try and file the misleading motion with the fraudulent claim in the cases that followed throughout the week.



Private contractors tearing down public housing units at Cabrini Green Projects in Chicago.

PHOTO/JOE PEERY

CORPORATE HIDDEN HAND — There is a transfer from public housing to private housing going on. They are calling it a “transformation.” This is because they want people to think something good is coming out of this. While the public entities, CHA and HUD, are well known and always in the news, little if anything is known about the private corporations who all have been given lucrative contracts. For instance, Sanford Kahn LTD, is the top eviction firm in the state of Illinois and handles most of the evictions in Cabrini Green. In fact it is Sanford Kahn LTD who has written the lease for all public housing tenants

in the mixed income units. In the upper right hand corner of the lease it reads “Sanford Kahn Copyright 1981, 180 N LaSalle, All Rights Reserved, Revised February 2007. This lease is so oppressive that it has been compared with a “contract of adhesion” which simply means it puts all power in the hands of the landlord and leaves the tenants with little or no rights. The last sentence of the rules and regulations reads, “If you violate the lease or any of the rules and regulations, it is grounds for termination of your tenancy.”

Henegan, another private firm, has the contracts to demolish the four remaining buildings. They will receive just under a Million Dollars per building. The only thing standing in their way is the families at 1230 N. Burling.

CONCLUSION — The families at 1230 N. Burling aren’t asking for much. All they ask is that for once CHA and their corporate allies adhere to the law and allow them one last Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years and possibly Martin Luther King’s Birthday in the safety of their homes, or in a home of their choosing.

RIP Tent City. No Affordable Housing In The Foreseeable Future

By Eric Sheptock

Washington, D.C. — On July 10 about 100 community activists began a tent city on a vacant lot which is owned by DC Government (and the citizens of DC) called “Parcel 42”. This action was part of a national effort to bring attention to the need for housing as a human right. Many of the participants are part of the National Right To Housing Movement.

This particular plot of land was chosen for the action so that we could highlight the broken promise of the outgoing mayor Adrian Fenty to build affordable housing on this lot that has sat vacant for several years and promises to sit vacant for at least two more. Plans were drawn up and development slated to begin in December 2009. No ground has been broken yet and the official word is that it may be at least two more years before ground is finally broken on this “planned” project.

Community activists have floated ideas for interim uses such as a community garden, outdoor theatre or a recreational facility. But no one has stepped forth to take on the tedious tasks of gaining public support for any of the aforementioned ideas and making it happen.

Nonetheless, on September 22, a city official posted a sign warning that the tent city would be demolished in two weeks. (This is in compliance with DC law which mandates that a 14-day notice be posted warning that an encampment will be dismantled.) Fifteen days later, the city moved forward with the demolition. (See e-mail from an eye-



Eric Sheptock teaching Georgetown University students about the need for affordable housing and the reasons for the tent city.

PHOTO/DONATED

witness/tent city participant in box on right.) During the 15-day grace period I made calls and sent e-mails encouraging people to retrieve their belongings and some did.

Even though the tent city lasted for three months, we the participants feel that the city has yet to get the message. The shutdown was generated by the complaints of some well-off residents who complained that the tent city had become a messy eyesore. That said, there was a MESSage in the “MESS” that they saw. But, sadly, people only saw that their neighborhood and property had been devalued by the presence of the tent city. This aligns with how people don’t want a homeless shelter, housing for the homeless, a drug rehab center or other agencies or accommodations that help the poor brought into their communities because it will devalue their neighborhoods and property. I

guess they don’t understand how horrific they make people feel as they say that they don’t want those people around because they’d rather that their inanimate belongings retain their value — a value which is evidently greater than that of a human life (in THEIR eyes of course.) And so we see the effects of crapitalism: lack of concern for one’s fellow citizens and a government that would much rather bulldoze a peaceful tent city than to help its residents find public or affordable housing.

We plan to have other tent cities and to use new tactics as well until the DC government and DC citizens get the MESSage. We have already begun to make plans for our next action. We will continue to be a thorn in the side of DC government and a burr in the shoe of DC’s unconcerned citizens until housing is a realized human right in this “Human Rights City”. It ain’t over ‘til it’s over!!!!

PEOPLE OVER PROFIT AND PROPERTY!!!!

By: Arun Aguiar
To: undisclosed-recipients

Between 8:20 and 10 this morning, a bulldozer tore down all the structures. A garbage truck carted everything marked as trash to the dump, while a separate truck carried off a whole lot of belongings deemed valuable to a storage site. New gates and locks were installed, and No Trespassing signs were hung on the fences.

A small contingent of cordial police officers, along with a genial “Chris” from the Mayor’s Office, and two other unknown suits were present. However, none of the residents happened to be on site while all this was going on. I returned just when the trucks were about to take off, and in the nick of time, after being hoisted onto the truck, I retrieved intact a suitcase, tent, and knapsack that I had set aside.

Craig Keller, Team Leader of the Homeless Outreach Program at DC’s Office of Homeless Services, [see contact info. be-

low] who had been to the site a couple of days ago and had cautioned Renee that the removal was imminent, supervised the separation of materials as valuable and trash. Some critically important personal belongings of mine got mistakenly sent to the dump, but Mr. Keller kindly drove me there. The garbage truck driver was alerted to await our arrival, and he tipped his load only after we reached him, and I was happily able to locate what I was missing.

En route to the dump site, I left a wallet belonging to Stan with Jill, a receptionist at Bread for the City, for her to hand over.

C’est la vie. All in a day’s work. RIP, Tent City: The End of an Experiment in Outdoor Living

CRAIG KELLER’s info:

Team Leader, Homeless Outreach Program, 64, New York Ave NE, 4th Fl., Office of Homeless Services, Washington DC 20002, 202-671-0388 main, 202-841-2915 cell, craig.keller@dc.gov

Beyond Foreclosure Fraud: Moving to Take Back the Land through Strategic Action

By Land and Housing Action Group

As one of the many progressive social forces struggling for systemic change, particularly as it relates to land ownership, housing rights and ecological sustainability, the Land and Housing Action Group (LHAG) of the Take Back the Land Movement (TBLM) believes that the broad social movement pressing for housing rights and justice must press the following transitional demands to ensure there is a more democratic and equitable outcome to the struggle over foreclosure fraud, outcomes that can potentially heighten the overall contradictions within the system of capitalist exploitation and appropriation that is the root of the crisis.

1. The Government must take over and directly administer all of the loan modification programs it has established since 2008, eliminating the Banks from the process to ensure that homeowners

and renters are adequately protected and housed.

2. All of the foreclosure fraud victims, be they homeowners or tenants, must receive restitution for their financial hardships and the criminal liability perpetrated against them by the Banks and Government institutions and agencies responsible for the execution of the fraudulent actions.

3. All the homes and housing units currently being processed and/or warehoused by Banks saved by the TARP program be publicly identified and utilized as “public housing” and opened to inhabitation by the millions of individuals and families displaced from their homes or the tens of thousands languishing on public and/or affordable housing waiting lists.

4. That the aforementioned public housing units be transformed into cooperative housing units and land trusts to be directly governed and administered on a local level by the impacted families

and communities.

None of these demands can be realized without the concerted direct action of those most affected and those in solidarity in critical mass. To push these demands forward, the Land and Housing Action Group is encouraging all progressive forces pressing for systemic change to join us in calling and organizing for the following courses of action:

1. Nationally coordinated days of action against the Banks, Government Institutions like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, Congress and the Obama administration to utilize the millions of foreclosed properties as public housing for the countless displaced and homeless families.

2. A nationally coordinated rent strike of homeowners and renters facing foreclosure and eviction to press the Banks and the Government to meet the aforementioned demands.

3. Community occupations of the millions of vacant properties and land

to transform into cooperative housing and land trusts to ensure the sustainability of our families and communities.

For more information email <mailto:housingrights@ushrnetwork.org> or call 404.588.9761 or visit <http://www.takebacktheland.org> and <http://www.ushrnetwork.org>.



Take Back the Land protest against empty homes while families are in the streets.

PHOTO/DONATED

Incalculable Savagery

72 Immigrants Massacred

By Richard Monje

“Incalculable savagery” is how President Felipe Calderon of Mexico referred to the recent massacre of 72 — 58 men and 14 women — found on August 25, 2010, near San Fernando, Tamaulipas. Only one Ecuadoran immigrant escaped with his life.

This massacre is the latest in a series of massacres of immigrants that has happened in Mexico this year: On July 5, 51 bodies were found in a ditch

What is the driving force in the declining value of life in this hemisphere?

Calderon, the U.S. State Department and the media jump and blame the “Zetas” or other gangs, to appear as though it is the same old problems — drugs and drug trafficking. This explains nothing!

Why are Mexicans, Central and South Americans traveling thousands of miles risking life and limb and then on the last leg of such a trek facing death by gangs, crossing the desert or at hands of ICE or anti-immigrant hoodlums in the US?

There is a greater force impacting this hemisphere and the world.

Over the past several decades technological development has taken production and the world economies to a fundamental new level. This process has been known as globalization and has many components. One of the most significant characteristics is the elimination of the nation-state and national economies are forced

to adapt to a new world economic order. New trade agreements and “austerity” programs that further drive the masses into deeper poverty are known as “neoliberalism” in the hemisphere outside the US. The world capitalist class, the national “oligarchies” that historically dominated these countries, has scrambled to adjust to these rapid technological and economic changes. The old social antagonisms are merging

with a new movement that has evolved from these changes. Competition for the division of the wealth of the world (or regional areas) has increased, dramatically breaking out in conflicts between different sectors, but the majority of the masses are left out of the economic and political changes.

This fundamental transformation raises many questions too complex to address in this article. There are many attempts to wrestle with the consequences of these changes to poor and working people. One option is to migrate. Workers and peasants are driven from the land — from rural areas, the hills, mountains, valleys, fertile land (or not) to (and from the factories) small towns or big cities to other countries in search of, not a better life, but for survival!

Many poor and working people have chosen to struggle against these attempts to lower the standard of living and to lower the value of life to zero through the old forms of struggle. Others are trying to create new forms.

“Incalculable savagery” yes, Mr. Calderon, savagery, that has been directed by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other representatives of global capital that seek to control the national resources — physical and human — of these countries for their and, indeed, your gain at the expense of other human beings — men, women and children.

Shame on you and your IMF cronies for doing nothing but making things worse!



Immigrant Rights Protest.

PHOTO/RUDY CORRAL

of garbage outside Monterrey, Nuevo Leon. In May, 55 bodies were found in an abandoned mine near Taxco de Alarcón, Guerrero.

The majority of those killed are from Central America (Honduras, El Salvador and others) as well as from South America (Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia and Brazil, at least). This is a tragedy that did not start with this event or this year. WHY did this happen?

Corporations Pushed Anti-Immigrant Law, Says NPR

In a story aired October 28, National Public Radio (NPR) reported that private prison companies have played a role in pushing for the enactment of anti-immigrant laws such as Arizona’s SB 1070. The law is being challenged in the courts. If it’s upheld, SB 1070 requires police to lock up anyone they stop who cannot show proof that they are in the country legally. The prison companies stand to gain from the new law because they could be building and operating new prisons to hold immigrants who are detained.

NPR reported that its analysis of campaign finance reports, lobbying documents and corporate records revealed “a quiet, behind-the-scenes effort to help draft and pass Arizona Senate Bill 1070 by an industry that stands to benefit from it: the private prison

industry.” NPR noted that the law “could send hundreds of thousands...to prison in a way never done before. And it could mean hundreds of millions of dollars in profits to private prison companies responsible for housing them.”

According to NPR, one of the prison companies involved is “the billion-dollar Corrections Corporation of America—the largest private prison company in the country.” NPR said that it reviewed Corrections Corporation of America reports that showed that “executives believe immigrant detention is their next big market. Last year, they wrote that they expect to bring in ‘a significant portion of our revenues’ from Immigration and Customs Enforcement,” the agency that detains undocumented immigrants.

Government Scorecard: F

By John Slaughter

College students in Georgia are on the march. While politicians rail on about how education must be a priority, they have seen billions cut from state coffers for education, raising state tuition and fees for public colleges and universities, denying more and more access to higher education at all. Tough laws are being passed that deny the right to public higher education for undocumented immigrants.

The public school system ranks 49th in the nation, and the response of government is to rush to privatize, moving to charter schools and issuing vouchers and subsidies for private schools. Race to the Top, as with No Child Left Behind, leaves most behind.

The crisis in education in Georgia is a reflection of the growing polarization between the haves and the have-nots, and how the government, openly merged with the corporations, pursues an aggressive agenda in their interests. A confrontation is building between

the people, whose needs grow more dire every day, and a government whose only interest seems to be to protect the wealth of the ruling class.

There are now over 1.7 million people in Georgia living in poverty.



Georgia students at a Defend Higher Education rally.

PHOTO /JOHN SLAUGHTER

602,000 of them are children. 650,000 Georgians are now receiving food stamps, and food pantries can hardly keep up with the demand. 1.9 million are uninsured. Georgia is among the ranks of those states hit hardest by home foreclosures. Unemployment remains at 10 per cent. Many of the faces of the poor are new, formerly from the ranks of the middle class.

The needs of the people are great. They will be marching and protesting and demanding that government do something about their poverty, their hunger, their homelessness, their health care, and their education.

Right now the scorecard of government is squarely an F. The question is, when will the people finally have enough, and move to see to it that government operates in their interests?

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The Plight of the Black Farmers of Arkansas

By Simuel Ramey and "Sell-it-\$yl"

Another one bites the...Discrimination

Black Arkansas farmers are upset about the delaying tactics used by our government in their efforts not to honor the Executive Order by President Obama to settle the Pigford II (class action) lawsuit. I spent some time seeking out local farmers around the McAlmont area that had signed up for the class action lawsuit, who did not receive any of the initial settlement money in 1999, either because they did not "qualify" for reasons nobody understands but our government, or didn't make the "thirty" day deadline issued by "U.S." government during the late 1990's (1997) when they started sending out notifications.

Ironically, I wish the "U.S." government would stop putting vital information like this in the "book."*[In reference to the old adage] when they didn't want Black folks to know something, they post it in a book, knowing Black folks don't read books.]

In previous issues of the People's Tribune, the focus was on special-interest (non-profit) groups that are trying to fill the void of low-income underprivileged and at-risk kids in the area, by providing structure in their lives, guidance, and love.

Karoma Smith, the Director of the H.E.A.T Foundation, Inc., Pastor Joseph Hollis, C.E.O. of C and J Entertainment, Chris Martin, Director of the McAlmont Seminoles Youth Football Program, all share the same sentiments about the plight of Arkansas Black Farmers; and that is that they are absolutely appalled

at how the U.S. Government keeps oppressing Black people and keeping our Black Farmers in "second-class status."

Mind you, these aforementioned groups are in full support of our Black Farmers. Their message to our government is that "this type of discrimination is not going to be tolerated any longer." You can't hide behind Discrimination of this type. So, from that standpoint, we're asking that every Black Farmer in Arkansas contact the "National Black Farmers Association" and push the issue. As well, you are urged to contact Senator Blanche Lincoln until her phone burns up; let's keep this issue "hot" The consensus of small local area farmers about this mess is that they are upset about the slowness of Congress to act on the

allocation of the \$1.25 billion by President Obama. [What's the hold-up] have you not accumulated enough interest on the \$1.15 billion that you are holding in escrow?}[sic] Nevertheless these local special-interest groups strongly support the unity of the "National Black Farmers Association." They all feel that the "Association" is very effective and is moving in the right direction. They all feel that this is just another form of the bureaucratic red-tape that only afflicts the Blacks in this country.

If any organization wants to put on a benefit to support any of these groups, please contact sellitsyl358@hotmail.com or call 501.612. 4213.

Seniors sleeping in America's streets

OAKLAND — In America, supposedly a land of opportunity and wealth, there are several parts of our society that have been displaced. The social programs that were once a temporary system against difficult times have either been severely cut or dismantled altogether. In Oakland, (and throughout the country,) seniors walk about with their possessions and they are sleeping outside. There are only a few shelters and most of them are full with waiting lists. When you have senior citizens, the majority of

whom worked all their lives, homeless, or mentally and physically disabled, unable to get proper care, and families (even with both parents working) without resources, (even single parents with less resources); no aid, childcare, health-care, etc., it seems that our government and elected officials have not done the job that they were designated to do. It is becoming apparent in this great society that the disenfranchised with little or no financial resources, but who have over the course of their lives lined the pock-

ets of those in power, now get little or no assistance. It's up to the great mass of people to change this deplorable situation and demand that the government provide for those in need.

— Simuel Ramey



Simuel Ramey is one of the People's Tribune's star distributors.

PHOTO /SANDY REID

Racism and the White Worker

They are coming in mass
They are breeding in record number
They are dancing across our borders
They are revolving in and out of our prisons
They are washing all our dishes
Watch out!!!
They are teaching our children to hate
How to hate America
How to hate their parents
How to dance in ways
Their grandmother would never
Have approved of
Oh no!!!
They are the un Americans
Radical feminists
Orthodox Marxists
Gay teachers
Wearing pink t shirts
Think of the children!!!
They are draining our system
Giving us indigestion
With kimchi and curry
Rice and beans
They are illegal immigrants
Somali pirates
Indonesian Muslim
Welfare Thugs
Oh my!!!!
This is what they teach you in this country
If you are poor and you are white
That the mere presence
Of the so called other
Somehow puts you in mortal danger
Today we have so called
A war on drugs
A war on terror
A border situation
But this dialogue is no more honest
No less racist
When at the turn of
The last century
These same people

The Lou Dobbs
The Bill O' Reilys
The Sean Hannitys
The Glen Becks
Would have been talking
About negro problems
Yellow perils
And Irish questions
Yeah Irish
You see back then
They divided the whites
Along ethnic lines
The Irish from the Italian
The Pole from the Jew
The German from the Slav
And all of them
Far beneath the Mayflower WASP
The rich sold the poor melting pots
And an American dream
Dangled carrots and carried big sticks
They taught people
To fear and hate their neighbor
To claw at and kill one another
Just for the opportunity
To be exploited
When questioned about unions
The robber baron Jay Gould
Once said
"I can always hire one half
of the working class
To kill the other"
Capitalism has always been about
The division of labor
And racism
The division of workers
In the economic expansion
When the Ethnic European
Became white
They intermarried
Intermingled
Moved to better cities
With better schools
Better futures
And never looked back

Why is that
Same reason you got
A million Mexicans
Marching in the streets
Carrying American flags
Same reason civil rights
Workers carried signs
Reading I am a man
Because struggle in this country
Has never been about destroying
The system
But fighting for a place within it
For a fair share
A fair shake
A slice
A taste
But this American pie
Is poison to its core
It is a system
Based on exploitation
And I have known
Enough Gung Ho
John Wayne GI Joe
Black and Latino
Soldiers to know
That racism
Is not bred nor sewn into the color
Of a skin
But rather rises
With an imperial flag
With the need to dehumanize a victim
To create an other
To distract from your hunger
To do the bidding of your master
To blind you from recognizing
Your own god damn brother
This is the history
Of this country
But it need not be
Its future
Look around you
This suffering
Knows no color
We are common people

With common needs
Common dreams
Common desires
And you best believe
Common enemies
So this fight to shape our futures
Will not be fought along color lines
But between those
With enough common sense
To know to point their guns
In the right direction
And those who are just out of their
God damn mind
Blaming single mothers
Blaming immigrants
Blaming pregnant teenagers
Blaming their own children
For their problems
For the economy's direction
Defending a system
That hasn't had place for them
For three decades
But for the rest of us
Let us redream this America
Let us create a truly new world
One free of division
Free of needless famine
Free from war
Free of prisons
Free from the ideology of racism
One worthy of allegiance
With justice, liberty
Healthcare, housing,
Clothing, a seventy two inch
Plasma flat screen
Or whatever the fuck else
We may want or need
For all
A society we today
Are capable of building
If we only knew our strength
If we only knew our enemy

— Matt Sedillo

Our Government needs to help put a stop to poverty

By Lenette Evans



The 2009 recession was one of the worst years for poverty here in America. The total number of Americans living in poverty hit 43.6 million, the highest level in 51 years and the national poverty rate rose to 14.3 percent from 13.2 percent according to data released last month by the Census Bureau.

One in every seven Americans are living in poverty. Among the hardest hit poorest states are Louisiana, Mississippi, and certain areas of Texas. States with the lowest poverty statistics are: Wyoming, Hawaii, Minnesota and several east coast states.

Eleven of the poorest poverty states are Mississippi, Arkansas, Kentucky, Washington D.C, New Mexico, West Virginia, Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

There are over 40 million people on food stamps! The problem with our food stamp programs in America is that most of the foods and drinks are high in sugar and there is huge epidemic of obesity

and diabetes. The USDA needs to STOP JUNK FOOD AND SUGARY FOODS and replace this with healthier foods.

There needs be more educational programs available at schools for kids as well as adults in our community.

Our crooked government needs to stop pocketing taxpayers money and apply it to health, nutrition, and educational programs. Good health and making wiser decisions starts by educating people first, then giving them healthier foods that will be available for those that are on food stamps.

If all that is available is junk then people will continue to have more health problems. This needs to be corrected!

Our government needs to stand up and help people..... THERE IS NO REASON FOR POVERTY AND HOMELESSNESS IN AMERICA.

If Candy Christmas of the BRIDGE MINISTRY, in Nashville can feed over 250 people every week hot meals and give them a bag of food and clothes our government can step up and help those communities across the USA to do the same thing and have more programs like this available to everyone.

People in our community and

churches need to come together so we can ALL do a little something in helping those in need and to share the love of Jesus Christ making a difference to help end poverty!

Lenette Evans, Saving Souls Ministry Pleasant View, TN, 269-876-1848, Savingsouls1@yahoo.com.

New Anthology brings together 76 Poets

Caza de Poesía proudly announces the launch of our new anthology **Revolutionary Poets Brigade** bringing together **76** poets from **25** countries around the world speaking **truth to power**. This collection, featuring local, national and international poets, includes selected works by Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Jack Hirschman, Agneta Falk, Luis J. Rodriguez, Majid Naficy, Matt Sedillo, Mark Lipman and Antonieta Villamil, just to name a few.

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Hip Hop Congress

An Interview with Jie-Song Zhang: Creator of Emerging Face of A Nationless World.

By Shamako Noble

Shamako Noble: What prompted the development of this film project? What is your vision for what the outcome of this film project will be five years from now?

Jie-Song Zhang: In the beginning, we each arrive here, not yet conscious of who or what we are, but full of a great hunger to know, our eyes grabbing frantically at the world in front of us. And from the very beginning, living is a reaction to what we feel. The ache of an empty stomach, the fear of our mother's absence...

As we progress, growing, the world is organized into ideas — symbols we memorize like patterns of nighttime stars, constellations that help us navigate the vast space of reality. Still, we are reacting to our feelings: the comfort of being liked, the discomfort of not, our running from the fear that lies draped in shadows, our running towards the mystery that lies draped in shadows... And with maturity, a new feeling arrives to us, whether we recognize its presence or not, one that will influence our direction for the remainder of our adult lives — it is the hunger for meaning.

We slowly collect pieces of the world, trying to form a cohesive image, working to put together a puzzle whose instruction book is full of true and false instructions alike. And in the building of this puzzle, there is always a larger central piece struggling for a proper fit — the piece that is ourselves.

Endlessly, we are shifting the shape of ourselves against the backdrop of how we perceive the world, driven by our desire to find that most suitable shape such that this puzzle might somehow reveal to us a sense of completeness, a sense



Jie Song-Zhang (second from right).

PHOTO/DONATED

of meaning.

Emerging Face of a Nationless World, for me, is the alignment of the world's pieces in a way that reveals to us a sense of unity, a oneness — the great puzzle made complete in accordance with not merely my role in the world, but the convergence of all of us as individual pieces into a cohesive image that gives the human presence on this earth a beauty and purpose.

*

In 5 years, this project will have facilitated increased connectivity, communication, and understanding between communities across the world — and it will have rendered numerous moments of beauty, artistic and cultural, along its course. Such results could not manifest in 5 years, if we do not believe that they will, today.

SN: Music, art and culture play a huge role in this project particularly Hip Hop. What do you think about the differ-

ent between American and International Hip Hop and how does that difference play out in the film if at all?

JSZ: Human DNA functions as a biological blueprint for a particular human mind and body. But while this DNA will determine a great deal about a particular man or woman, the environment and experiences of this human will ultimately render the final characteristics of his or her identity.

With Hip-Hop, or any artform, it is the same. There is a DNA to Hip-Hop as embodied by its particular structure as an artform — its usage of language and rhythm as a form of communication. It is a structure that enables the channeling of a special force, both in terms of raw energy and ideas — a rhythmic speech with room for many words, a hypnotic lecture, chaperoned to the ear with unrelenting percussion the way world leaders are escorted by marching soldiers. It is a structure that lends itself to the broadcast of high-energy ideas and

feelings, or hardened, urgent ones. Yet from place to place, Hip-Hop takes on the particular cultural and social characteristics of its environment. This is how Hip-Hop differs from state to state, and ultimately, from country to country.

The significance of Hip-Hop's many divergent and evolutionary forms lies in the significance of the variation in human expression as a whole. In each body of Hip-Hop culture, just as in each individual human, there is a reflection of a distinct approach to being — of a particular time, land, and set of circumstances. Yet, between all Hip-Hop communities, just as between all human beings, there is a central cord, as if an instrument of one string whose music resonates from each of our bodies, that is unequivocally the same. Ours has always been the challenge of identifying this cord, of hearing its ageless music.

To be continued.



Hip Hop Congress (HHC) has partnered with the People's Tribune to connect Hip Hop and other cultural

movements to practical struggles all over the U.S. For more information on how you can get involved, please visit www.hiphopcongress.com.

— Shamako Noble, Page Editor
Email: shamako@hiphopcongress.com

Case Testing Law Forbidding Recording of Police Continues

Editor's note: The following is excerpted from a press release in this case.

On October 22, in Judge Stanley Sacks' courtroom, attorney for Chicago artist Chris Drew, Josh Kutnick, argued his motion to suppress the audio-evidence against Mr. Drew in a case of national interest that exposes the unconstitutional Illinois eavesdropping law. There is no Federal First Amendment case law on whether citizens are able to audio-record policemen in public while they are on duty. In most states it is legal but Illinois, Massachusetts and Maryland have been arresting citizens on felony charges for audio-recording police in action in public.

Josh Kutnick argued that Mr. Drew's

Fourth Amendment right against unreasonable searches was violated because he was arrested for selling art. They searched his audio-recorder without a warrant, later charging him with felony eavesdropping for recording his arrest. The date for the ruling is in Judge Stanley Sacks' courtroom on November 22, at 1:30.

Mr. Drew's case is significant because the ability of cell phones to gather audio and video evidence has exploded. Citizens now have the power to watch their police and other public officials in public like never before. How will our society react to this change? This case is exploring that question. Will the use of technology to facilitate the democratic oversight by citizens of their public ser-

vants be permitted or will it be punished. Will we tend further toward a democracy or further toward a police state?

For 23 years as the Executive Director of the Uptown Multi-Cultural Art Center, Mr. Drew has advocated for artists. Many people think that Mr. Drew's long time criticism of the City's policy toward artists' vending rights and his challenge to the peddlers license are the real reasons the Cook County State's Attorney is charging the artist with this extreme first class felony for audio-recording his own arrest.

For updates on the case, please go to <http://www.art-teez.org/free-speech.htm> or email umcac@art-teez.org.



Artist Chris Drew was arrested for selling his art. He audio-recorded the arrest and was charged with a felony under the Illinois Eavesdropping law.

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VOICES FROM BENTON HARBOR, MI

Whirlpool and Benton Harbor City Commissioners Form Partnership to Drive out the Poor

By Dorothy Pinkney

The Benton Harbor City Commissioners have formed a partnership with Whirlpool, the largest appliance maker in the world. The partnership is to continue developing Benton Harbor and, in the process, to drive the homeless and the residents completely out of the city.



may do. They fear that the poor will rob the rich who come to Benton Harbor. The solution is to get rid of all Black people from the city of Benton Harbor with the help of the all-Black City Commissioners. Recently, a \$50 million tax abatement was approved for Whirlpool's new \$68 million complex in Benton Harbor's



Protest against Whirlpool's land grab.

PHOTO CREDIT/BRETT JELINEK (LEFT) AND DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM (RIGHT)

The final nail has been placed in the coffin.

Already, the homeless are almost everywhere in the city, in front of you behind you, by the side of you, and behind windows. You can hear them around the corner and see their shadow from far away. You try to avoid looking directly into their eyes and you pretend you do not hear them when they talk to you. You walk around the block to avoid them and you walk faster to leave them behind you. These people that you consider to be zombies are actually human beings. They are just homeless.

Benton Harbor is overwhelmingly poor and majority Black. By their actions, Whirlpool is saying that Black people are criminals, and that they look filthy, Whirlpool does not know what kind of scary things homeless people

downtown by the commissioners. This tax give-away is in addition to previous million dollar land grabs for the lake front development. It is time the people take a stand not only against Whirlpool, but against the city commissioners.

Berrien County trial court's vicious attack on a Black family: By Tiffany Henderson

On May 15, 2010, my life changed when my father Eddie Peek (61-year old Black man) was killed by a drunken driver Paige Karsten (21-year-old white female at 2:21 am while Eddie was at work for the Herald Palladium. Since his death, my family and I have had to deal with a prosecuting attorney by the name of Michael Septic that believes (and has said to the victim's family) that "poor Paige," the drunken murderer, "has

suffered enough." He has told the victim's family that Paige Karsten's speeding on I-94 with a blood alcohol level of 2.17 was not egregious enough to be charged with second degree murder — only because she is white.

In California, a drunken driver was charged with Vehicular Manslaughter or Second Degree Murder for running a stop light and killing the driver. My father was not a famous baseball player but was a long resident of Benton Harbor, a supporter of the community and well known, and loved by many.

When this journey started I had faith that the judicial system would prevail, but now four months later, I pray for a higher justice. In my 37 years of being a Black woman I have been exposed to prejudices of all types but never so blatant, demoralizing and relentless as what the Berrien County Judicial system has exposed, the very system that is supposed to be for the people, all of the people.

My journey will continue and only GOD knows how it will end and my faith is still strong but my essence has changed. I pray that this tragedy will be the start of a new journey and will change the essence of many for the betterment of minorities in Benton Harbor.

Excerpts from opening remarks at NAACP banquet from Rev. E. Pinkney, President, NAACP, Benton Harbor:

"I have a dream that people here in Benton Harbor will start to stand up. I have a dream that one day we will look forward to taking care of our children. This is something that we can do. All you have to do is do a little bit. I am here to encourage you to protect our children. We have allowed the courthouse to rule the future of our children. We have allowed Whirlpool to come in and do whatever they want to do. We're going to take this thing to a whole different level."

Excerpts from a speech by Attorney Sam Adams, Jr. on our democratic rights at the NAACP banquet:

"We got to get our stuff together. The opposition is well financed, motivated and filled with hate. ..This generation better exercise your rights or you are going to lose them forever. ..The 15th Amendment, the right to vote, was ratified by Congress around the time of the Civil War. That is the right to change that which we cannot live with. That is the right to say that if you are not going to represent us the way we want to be represented, get moving. I can find someone to represent our interests. But we have to do this as a whole. Think about it. Put the pieces together. What's the one thing you know in just about all 50 states happens to you when you are convicted of a crime? You lose your right to vote. Why are those two things connected? Because they know that this is the voice of the underprivileged. Everybody knows the statistic — two million Black men in jail. How many young African American men, how many poor white men are getting felonies everyday while on probation? Millions. And they lose their voice. They lose their ability to change that which affects our community. It is happening by the dozens every day. What does that mean for us? The Fifth and Sixth Amendments are absolutely important to our survival. Make sure that we get a fair trial. Make sure that these young men have adequate representation. Make sure that they are able to call witnesses to their trial. Do you know how you can do this? Go to those courthouses and sit. Make sure that whatever they say that person may have done, they prove beyond a reasonable doubt. Get on those juries and make that promise a reality."

DONATE TO KEEP THE REVEREND OUT OF PRISON!

Rev. Pinkney must pay \$5,000 in court costs and fines, the consequence of a year long illegal prison term. Without paying he will be returned to prison, something Whirlpool and the courts would like nothing more. Any size donation would be appreciated. BANCO is a 501C-3 and tax deductible. Send to BANCO, 1940 Union St., Benton Harbor, MI 49022. Thanking you in advance.

— Pastor Mary Gault,
Battle Creek MI

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